Appl. No. 09/736,688
Amdt. dated July 13, 2004
Reply to Office action of May 5, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Receipt of the Office action dated May 5, 2004 is hereby acknowledged. In that action the Examiner: 1) rejected claims 9 and 10 as alleged anticipated by Ford (U.S. Patent No. 5,481,613); 2) rejected claims 1-2, 4-7 and 11-16 as alleged obvious over Ford in view of Liao (U.S. Patent No. 6,606,663); and 3) rejected claims 3 and 8 as allegedly obvious over Ford and Liao in further view of Geer (U.S. Patent No. 6,192,131).

With this Response, Applicants cancel claim 8. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

I.   AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

With this Response, Applicants amend a plurality of paragraphs on page 2 to add serial numbers and filing dates of the related applications, and to remove the attorney and client docket information. No new matter is submitted by these amendments.

II.   CLAIM REJECTIONS

A.   Claim 1

Claim 1 was rejected as allegedly obvious over Ford in view of Liao.

Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Ford and Liao does not teach or fairly suggest all the limitations of claim 1. While Ford may discuss a key release agent 32, the ACD keys sent to the decrypter 30 **are used to decrypt the ciphertext 20 of an encrypted message.** (Ford, Col. 6, lines 21-24; lines 62-66). Even if the credential caching proxy of Liao is combined with Ford, the combination still fails to teach that any keys held or generated by the key release agent 32 should do anything other than decipher the ciphertext of an encrypted message that has traversed a computer network.

Claim 1, by contrast, recites, "a key repository process on the central server, ... the key repository process further configured to access the enterprise credentials and **to authenticate authorizations to access the sensitive information in the database ... .".** The combination of Ford and Liao does not teach or fairly suggest that the keys held or generated by Ford's key release agent should "**authenticate authorizations to access the sensitive**

information in the database." The keys of Ford appear to allow deciphering of ciphertext in a message that includes the ACD and R key id. (Ford, Col. 6, lines 6-10; lines 63-66). For this reason alone claim 1 should be allowed.

Claim 1 further recites, "**an agent on the remote server, the agent acting on behalf of the key repository process** of the central server; ... [and] wherein the agent authenticates authorizations of specific applications to access resources ... ." The combination of Ford and Liao does not teach or fairly suggest the agent acting on behalf of the key repository process. If Ford's key release agent 32 is the claimed key repository process, the combination of Ford and Liao fails to teach "an agent on the remote server, the agent acting on behalf of the key repository process of the central server." If Ford's key release agent 32 is the claimed agent, the combination of Ford and Liao fails to teach "a key repository processor on the central server."

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, and all claims which depend from claim 1 (claims 2-6), should be allowed.

B.   Claim 4

Claim 4 was rejected as allegedly obvious over Ford in view of Liao.

Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Ford and Liao does not teach or fairly suggest all the limitations of claim 4. Ford appears to teach only a single key release agent 32. (Ford Figure 2; Col. 6, lines 62-66). Even if one was to (non-textually) duplicate Ford's key release agent 32, Ford fails to teach what the relationship should be between the duplicate agents.

Claim 4, by virtue of its dependency from claim 1, recites, "a key repository process on the central server... [and] an agent on the remote server... ." Claim 4 further recites, "wherein the agent in the remote server **is an independent key repository process... .**" Thus, with the limitations of claim 1 requiring a key repository process on the central server, two such processes are claimed, each residing on a different server. The combination of Ford and Liao does not teach such a system.

Claim 4 is allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1 from which it depends, as well as for the additional limitations therein.

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C.   Claim 7

Claim 7 was rejected as allegedly obvious over Ford in view of Liao.

Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Ford and Liao does not teach or fairly suggest all the limitations of claim 7. While Ford may discuss a key release agent 32, the ACD keys sent to the decrypter 30 **are used to decrypt the ciphertext 20 of an encrypted message that has traversed a computer network.** (Ford, Col. 6, lines 21-24). Even if the credential caching proxy of Liao is combined with Ford, the combination still fails to teach that keys held or generated by the key release agent 32 should do anything other than decipher the encrypted message that has traversed a computer network.

By contrast, claim 7 recites, "storing enterprise credentials in a database on a central server ...; establishing one or more master keys for managing information in the database by a key repository process ... ." Even if the credentials cached by Liao's proxy server are assumed to be the enterprise credentials in a database, the combination of Ford and Liao still fails to teach "one or more master keys for managing information in the database." The keys held or generated by Ford's key release agent appear to be operable only to decipher the ciphertext held by the decrypter 30.

Claim 7 further recites, "establishing communications between the key repository process on the central server and an agent on the remote server, the agent acting on behalf of the key repository process ... ." The combination of Ford and Liao does not teach or fairly suggest an agent acting on behalf of the key repository process.

Based on the foregoing, claim 7 should be allowed.

D.   Claim 9

Claim 9 stands rejected as allegedly anticipated by Ford.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Ford does not teach or fairly suggest all the limitations of claim 9. While Ford may discuss a key release agent 32, the ACD keys sent to the decrypter 30 **are used to decrypt the ciphertext 20 of an encrypted message.** (Ford, Col. 6, lines 21-24; lines 62-66).

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Claim 9, by contrast, specifically recites, "a central server **containing a cryptographically protected database** and configured to execute **a key repository process that controls access to the database... ."** As discussed above, the ACD keys of Ford are used to decipher a text message, not to "control[] access to the database... ." (*See, e.g.,* Ford Figure 2; Col. 6, lines 21-24; lines 62-66). For this reason alone claim 9 should be allowed.

Claim 9 further recites, "a remote server communicatively coupled to the central server, **the remote server configured to execute an agent process that acts on behalf of the key repository process... ."** If Ford's key release agent 32 is the claimed key repository process, the combination of Ford and Liao fails to teach "an agent process." If Ford's key release agent 32 is the claimed agent process, the combination of Ford and Liao fails to teach "a key repository process that controls access to the database."

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 9, and claim 10 which depends from claim 9, should be allowed.

E.   Claim 11

Claim 11 stands rejected as allegedly obvious over Ford in view of Liao.

Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Ford and Liao does not teach or fairly suggest all the limitations of claim 11. While Ford may discuss a key release agent 32, the ACD keys sent to the decrypter 30 **are used to decrypt the ciphertext 20 of an encrypted message**. (Ford, Col. 6, lines 21-24; lines 62-66). Even if the credential caching proxy of Liao is combined with Ford, the combination still fails to teach that any keys held or generated by the key release agent 32 should do anything other than decipher the ciphertext of an encrypted message.

Claim 11, by contrast, recites, "an agent process on the remote server, wherein the agent process acts on behalf of a key repository process executing on a central server... wherein the agent process is configured to authenticate authorization of the application program on behalf of the key repository process to access a cryptographically protected database on the central server." The combination of Ford and Liao does not teach or fairly suggest that the keys held

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or generated by Ford's key release agent should "authenticate authorization of the application program on behalf of the key repository process to access a cryptographically protected database." The keys of Ford appear to allow deciphering of ciphertext in a message that includes the ACD and R key id. (Ford, Col. 6, lines 6-10; lines 63-66). For this reason alone claim 1 should be allowed. The combination of Ford and Liao also does not teach or fairly suggest the agent acting on behalf of the key repository process. If Ford's key release agent 32 is the claimed key repository process, the combination of Ford and Liao fails to teach "an agent process on the remote server, wherein the agent process acts on behalf of a key repository process." If Ford's key release agent 32 is the claimed agent, the combination of Ford and Liao fails to teach "a key repository process executing on a central server."

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 11, and claim 12 which depends from claim 11, should be allowed.

F.   Claim 13

Claim 13 stands rejected as allegedly obvious over Ford and Liao.

Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Ford and Liao does not teach or fairly suggest all the limitations of claim 13. While Ford may discuss a key release agent 32, the ACD keys sent to the decrypter 30 **are used to decrypt the ciphertext 20 of an encrypted message**. (Ford, Col. 6, lines 21-24; lines 62-66). Even if the credential caching proxy of Liao is combined with Ford, the combination still fails to teach that any keys held or generated by the key release agent 32 should do anything other than decipher the ciphertext of an encrypted message that has traversed a computer network.

Claim 13, by contrast, specifically recites, "a key repository process on the central server, **the key repository process having one or more master keys for managing information in the database** and to authenticate authorizations to access the sensitive information in the database by applications on remote servers." The keys of Ford's key release agent (R key) are used to generate the ACD keys, not for "managing information in the database and to authenticate authorizations to access the sensitive information in the database."

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Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 13, and all claims which depend from claim 13 (claims 14-16), should be allowed.

III. CLAIM CANCELLATION

With this Response, Applicants cancel claim 8. This cancellation is to narrow the issue before the Examiner, and is without prejudice to later asserting the claim, such as in a continuation application.
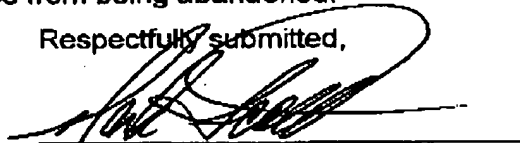
IV. CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite the resolution of this case, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

In the course of the foregoing discussions, Applicants may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. Moreover, it should be understood that there may be other distinctions between the claims and the cited art which have yet to be raised, but which may be raised in the future.

Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If any fees or time extensions are inadvertently omitted or if any fees have been overpaid, please appropriately charge or credit those fees to Hewlett-Packard Company Deposit Account Number 08-2025 and enter any time extension(s) necessary to prevent this case from being abandoned.

Respectfully submitted,

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